



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Next Jihad – Part 1

Guest(s): Johnnie Moore

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Dr. Dobson: Well, welcome, everyone, to Family Talk, a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson. Today we're going to shed light on an ongoing international tragedy involving our brothers and sisters in Christ, mostly in West Africa. Over the past decades, Christians living in Nigeria have been the targets of savage attacks from the terrorist organization known as Boko Haram. This Islamic extremist group and other offshoots of it are ruthlessly persecuting believers in many countries, but primarily, at least that's our focus for today, on West Africa. Christian churches in Nigeria have been burned down, their homes ransacked, their children abducted, women and young girls savagely raped, and thousands have been grotesquely murdered. Others have simply vanished.

Now there are many of us in the Christian community who are not well-informed on this subject. In fact, many people know nothing about it. They're largely unaware of what's taking place. If we had to observe it, we had to watch it, we would be heartsick over it, but it's so far away. We don't know that culture. We don't know those people. We've got problems of our own. We're all absorbed in our own lives, in our own children, and our work, and our churches that we don't seem to have time for those who are suffering, but that's not right. We must care. We must do what we can to spread the word. That's what we're going to be talking about today.

Now sadly, again, the media and the church at large have not really addressed these horrendous and religiously-motivated attacks. My guest today is an authority on this growing tragedy, and he's passionate about bringing it to light. He's here with us today to talk about it. I hope you will pay close attention to what he has to say. This may not be a subject you regularly talk about. It is a subject you should know about. My guest is Johnnie Moore. He is my very, very good friend, a man I respect very highly. He's also, for the last four years, been a colleague of mine on the White House Faith Advisory Board.

He's a noted speaker, a best-selling author, and a respected human rights activist. Johnnie serves on the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom. He serves as president of the Congress on Christian Leaders. He is also a founder of the KAIROS organization, company, a communication and public relations consultant firm that works with us. Johnnie is also respected for

his global work on navigating the intersection of faith and foreign policy. He's also a loving husband and father. I've given him a lengthy introduction because I believe in this man and the work that he's doing. Honestly, Johnnie, I don't know where you get the energy to do all that you do. You're running around the world. It's not just here in the United States, is it?

Johnnie Moore: No, sir. I think you've left a good example for all of us on what can be done. It's always an honor to be with you.

Dr. Dobson: What does your passport look like? Is it stamped all over the place?

Johnnie Moore: It definitely has extra pages. I was talking to someone at the State Department the other day, who has to periodically check on my activities as a member of the U.S. Commission. She confessed to me that she had never actually talked to someone who had been to as many places as I have, and she's at the State Department. It's my passion, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: Well, where did that passion come from? Why do you concentrate your energy and your concern on people you don't know and a culture that you're not familiar with?

Johnnie Moore: When I was a child, my family went through a traumatic divorce, my parents. It caused me to ask a lot of questions about my faith. I found the answers to those questions in the persecuted church because the persecuted church-

Dr. Dobson: Where did you find the Lord?

Johnnie Moore: I grew up in a Christian family. I allegedly prayed a prayer when I was six years old. Just before my parents divorced, I was laying in my bed one night. I rolled over, and I looked at the wall. I can see it in my head now. I said, "God, I'm not really sure I've given my life to you, and so I want to do that right now." I count that as my salvation, when I was about 12. Then I started studying the Bible every night from 9:00 to 9:30.

Dr. Dobson: Did you really?

Johnnie Moore: Yes, I remember the story of Solomon as a kid, asking for wisdom, and I prayed that the Lord would give me wisdom. Yet I still had doubts because my parents were in church every time the doors were open. We were a very, very Christian family, yet it didn't hold their marriage together. I think of it differently now, a little further on in life. What I found was sometimes in America, we can have a form of godliness with no power. When you might lose your life today just because of being a Christian, you don't have the luxury of having a form of godliness with no power. You either believe it or you don't. My passion for the persecuted church... I say I sort of found my faith again by finding the testimony of the persecuted church.

Dr. Dobson: I take it that it was very difficult for you, losing the solidarity of your family. On behalf of all the people out there who are children of divorce, how did it hit you? How did you cope? We'll get to the subject of your book in a minute.

Johnnie Moore: It's amazing because I see even now, as sort of a diplomat working around the world in complicated situations, I learned to do that with my parents. I don't know how I had the ability to do this as a little kid. I just decided at the very beginning, I was going to have a relationship with both of them. I was doing shuttle diplomacy. I was picking up the phone, talking to my mom, talking to my dad, negotiating between the two of them. I mean, what the enemy meant for evil, God used for good. That same Christian foundation that caused me to be disillusioned also was sturdy enough that not only caused me not to lose my faith, but eventually allowed my parents to sort of find their faith again.

Dr. Dobson: Really.

Johnnie Moore: My father, for instance... When I started preaching, I got to see him every other weekend, and we would spend the weekends together. We drive to little churches in North Carolina and Georgia, 50 people. I'd preach a sermon there, and my father would sit there and listen to my sermons.

Dr. Dobson: You went to Liberty University, didn't you?

Johnnie Moore: Yes. I went to Liberty, which is an interesting story in and of itself. I mean, my mom went out to the mailbox one day. We were in Florence, South Carolina. We were at the end of our rope. I mean, people bringing us food... We couldn't pay the power bill. We were in poverty. There was a scholarship in the mail for my mom to attend a Bible institute at Liberty University. We moved on faith to Lynchburg, Virginia. We stayed in the dorms that summer until Mom could find a house and a job.

That's how I ended up in Lynchburg, Virginia, and eventually working at Liberty University, and became the campus pastor there, and senior vice president. I was there for 13 years. The Lord... Despite all the chaos in our world, He never left us behind. A verse in the book of Psalms... King David says, "I was young and now I'm old, and I've never seen the righteous forsaken." My parents' faith was weak, but it was strong enough that brought us eventually on the other side.

Dr. Dobson: Pastors used to talk often about the call to the ministry. My dad received a call that he didn't even want to do what the Lord told him to do and fought it for seven years, but it was a call. Did you have a call?

Johnnie Moore: It's funny. I always knew the Lord wanted me to preach, but like your father, I didn't want it. It's actually an interesting story, too, because I remember I was in a public school in Lynchburg, Virginia, my sophomore year of high school. I remember taking a public speaking course, and I had a bad attitude about it. Literally, I said to myself, "Well, if I have to do this, if I've got to be a preacher,

than I might as well take a public speaking course." It was interesting. Because of that course, I ended up doing competitive public speaking across Virginia. That's how Jerry Falwell Sr. found out about me. I was living in his town, but he didn't know me. Even though I sort of begrudgingly followed the will of God for my life, what ended up happening was it was the first step in a long series-

Dr. Dobson: He had an influence on your life.

Johnnie Moore: Yes. I mean, it was funny. I became the number one speaker in the state of Virginia as a high school student.

Dr. Dobson: Really.

Johnnie Moore: I went to a regional competition where I was expected to be the number one speaker, and I got third place. It was very strange. They had the judges' information sheets that they gave us afterwards. The judge wrote on the sheet that he had given me last place because I advocated the 10 Commandments in the classroom. In my speech, I said, "The 10 Commandments should be in the classroom. They're in the Supreme Court. Why can't they be in the classroom?" I was really depressed about it. I was sad. I got third place. I was a great speaker, all these things. I went home, and I wrote my pastor who was Jerry Falwell Sr. at Thomas Road Baptist Church. To me, it was just my pastor. Despite how busy he was, and the world that he lived in, and all the power and influence that he had, he was always a local church pastor. He read my letter on national television the next day.

Dr. Dobson: Really.

Johnnie Moore: For my being discriminated against, as I was. Then eventually, there's another story there too. One of those sermons at one of those tiny little churches... My grandfather was a pastor in these little churches in North Carolina. My dad and I would drive seven hours to get to a little church. I'd give a rudimentary sermon. Someone sent Jerry Falwell Sr. a cassette tape of one of those sermons. I came home from school one day when I was 17 years old in our basement apartment, two-bedroom basement apartment. Mom slept on the couch so that my sister and I could have rooms.

On our answering machine was a message from Jerry Falwell Sr. He had listened to the cassette tape that someone had randomly sent him of me preaching a sermon. He complimented me on the sermon and encouraged me. Eventually, I was 19 years old. I became the campus pastor at Liberty. That was sort of the beginning of things. He was the type of person that was always like you, investing in the next generation, believing in young people, and he gave me a chance.

Dr. Dobson: He not only had influence on you, but he had influence on me. He was my friend, and I watched him dealing with the culture. I got the message that we

have an obligation, the responsibility to represent Christ in the larger world. Let's get to your book and the topic that I introduced. Your next book is called *The Next Jihad: Stop the Christian Genocide in Africa*. I want to talk about that. Let me go back to my introduction and what I said about your service on the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom. A lot of people don't know what that is. Tell us.

Johnnie Moore: 20 years ago, the Congress passed a legislation that created an independent bipartisan commission that was supposed to be a watchdog on American foreign policy for religious freedom, to ensure that religious freedom was always in the agenda. President Trump appointed me to the commission as he appointed a few others. I sit alongside eight other commissioners, some appointed by Democrats, some appointed by Republicans. Our job is to make sure religious freedom is at the top of the agenda of foreign policy. I'm on my second term serving on the USCIRF Commission.

Dr. Dobson: Describe what's going on, primarily in Nigeria.

Johnnie Moore: Dr. Dobson, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa, has the largest economy in Africa, 10th largest oil reserves in the world. It's a very, very important country.

Dr. Dobson: In the world.

Johnnie Moore: In the world. Right now, in a year where more Christians will die than maybe in a year in recent history, 7 out of 10 persecuted Christians in the world that will die this year will die in Nigeria. Right before COVID-19 shut down the world, a good friend of mine, Rabbi Abraham Cooper from Los Angeles, and I traveled to Nigeria. We spent days meeting with victims and hearing the most horrific stories I've ever heard in my life. We decided to immediately write a book.

I went to see the president of HarperCollins Christian Publishing. I begged him. "I know you can't make a book this quickly, but there was an emergency in Africa. We need to do something about it." *The Next Jihad*... People know about the last jihads, ISIS in Syria and Iraq, everything that preceded it. Well, what people need to understand is that Boko Haram killed more Christians in Northeast Nigeria than ISIS did at their height in Iraq and Syria. I'm just determined to tell the whole world. That's why I wrote *The Next Jihad*. It says what's happening, why it's happening, what we need to do it,

Dr. Dobson: Put some numbers to that. How many people are dying on an annual basis?

Johnnie Moore: It's hard to say, but what I can tell you is whole villages, thousands of villages, totally burned to the ground. We write the book about a family that the only survivor is a six-year-old kid who was shot, but happened to miraculously survive. Cars being pulled over on the side of the road... They ask if you're a Christian or a Muslim. The Muslims are let free. The Christian men are killed. The women are sold as slaves. I mean, this is what's happening. I sat-

Dr. Dobson: It's a routine thing.

Johnnie Moore: It's a routine thing. By the way, this is very often happening right after a government checkpoint. There's so much corruption. There was one village that we write about where they went into the village afterwards. They burned everything down, killed every Christian, burned all the churches down. One state alone in Nigeria has had 7 or 800 churches burned to the ground. In this village they had burned, they found the cell phone of one of the perpetrators. In his contacts on the cell phone were members of the government and the police. No one's prosecuted. Nothing ever happens. I'm telling you, by the time we finish with this radio program today, more people will die in Nigeria because of their Christian faith alone.

Dr. Dobson: Unbelievable.

Johnnie Moore: It's an emergency situation.

Dr. Dobson: Tell me if I remember this story right. There was a news story a number of years ago where... I think it was Boko Haram, invaded a school and abducted all of the girls, and they disappeared. They went into slavery, or they were killed. I don't know. Was that Nigeria?

Johnnie Moore: It was Nigeria. There's another village, by the way, just last year, where Boko Haram went in. They kidnapped over 100 young women. They let every one of them go except for one. Her name is Leah Sharibu. We were there on the second anniversary of her captivity. Leah Sharibu wasn't released because she refused to convert to Islam. Her mom, who I met with... She said the government had negotiated the release of the girls, which means they paid a ransom, which means more people get kidnapped.

She's waiting for her daughter, and all the other girls come. She waits, and she waits, and she waits, and her daughter never comes. Where's Leah? Where's Leah? Where's Leah? One of the girls said, "We begged Leah to convert. She refused to convert, so they're keeping her." While we're talking right now, that young woman with more faith than anybody I know, is in the captivity of Boko Haram for one reason: she will not deny Jesus.

Dr. Dobson: Unbelievable.

Johnnie Moore: I mean, it's not happening years ago. This year, Michael Nnadi, 18-year-old seminarian... Michael Nnadi was kidnapped with three other seminarians. He was killed. The other three were let free. Well, why was he killed? The guy told a reporter. He said, "I killed Michael because he wouldn't stop talking to me about his gospel. I decided to send him to an early grave." I mean, these are like first-century Christians. I think the church in the West ought to care more about the persecuted church.

Dr. Dobson, when you read the new Testament, you can't go two pages in the New Testament without encountering a persecuted Christian. I think one of the reasons why we have such a mess in Christianity in the West is because we're not close to the persecuted church. I don't know how you can be a disciplined Christian if you aren't either being persecuted yourself or helping those who are because there are so many Christians around the world that are willing to die for a faith that we're barely willing to live for. There's a reason why in early American history, why every family had two books. They had a Bible, and they had Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Dr. Dobson: What is the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom doing specifically about this?

Johnnie Moore: Well, we have two tiers of countries that we watch all around the world. Nigeria is what we call a country of particular concern. It's the highest tier, which means we put Nigeria on the same level as North Korea and Iran when it comes to the persecution of Christians. The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom says the United States government needs to sanction people that are responsible for this. No one doesn't want to have a relationship with Nigeria, but Nigeria needs to get its act together. There are things that the government of the country can do that they're choosing not to do. It's time to say, enough is enough. People need to stop dying in your country.

The fact of the matter is every government in the world has one responsibility. That is to take care of its people. You should be able to drive from your home to a relative's home over Christmas, or to your church, or for that matter, synagogue or mosque, without having fear for your life in a democratic country. Nigeria is a democracy, and all these things are happening. Enough is enough. I decided with my friend, Rabbi Cooper, I don't know that we can solve the problem in Nigeria, but we can make sure that a day doesn't go by when the Nigerian government isn't feeling heat from people all around the world to get their act together.

Dr. Dobson: Is that what we, ordinary people, can do about this?

Johnnie Moore: Well, there are lots of things that we can do about it. The first thing is as Christians, we need to pray for our brothers and sisters the way we hope someone would pray for us.

Dr. Dobson: Absolutely.

Johnnie Moore: Secondly, we got to educate ourselves. We should be telling these stories around our dinner table. It wasn't easy, I should say, to get these stories, by the way. We went. We met with them. We documented them. I mean, some of these people risked their lives to come meet with us. They traveled on the same roads they were kidnapped on just because they had hoped that American Christians would care. With the one promise we made to-

Dr. Dobson: They're reaching out to you. When you're there, people are saying, "Help us."

Johnnie Moore: They're begging for help, Dr. Dobson. One whole village came to see us. We thought a representative of the village was going to come. The whole village crowded in our hotel room. Two weeks before, everything had been burned down. There's still adult men in clinical shock sitting across from us. They had hoped that as a couple of Americans, a rabbi and a Christian pastor, that just somehow, somehow that America could be their hope. The only promise I made them was, "We will be your voice." Their voice is silent.

Dr. Dobson: You came home and wrote a book.

Johnnie Moore: We wrote a book to tell the story.

Dr. Dobson: The book is *The Next Jihad*. Remind us of what a jihad is.

Johnnie Moore: A jihad is a holy war. Look, I mean, there are Muslims in Nigeria that are standing up against these people. There's one 86-year-old imam in a tiny village that when the terrorist came, he hid the Christians in the basement of the mosque to protect them.

Dr. Dobson: A mosque.

Johnnie Moore: A mosque. Not every Muslim in Nigeria is on this jihad. What has happened is a group of maniac terrorist Islamists have decided that whatever happens, they're going to take out every Christian in the country, and they're going to take out everyone who stands in their way, including other Muslims. We want to stop this holy war before it goes any further.

Dr. Dobson: Is it also happening in other places in West Africa?

Johnnie Moore: It is. I mean, everything that's happening in the Northeast Nigeria is happening in every country around it. Just a few days before our conversation, an American was freed by the United States government. President Trump has made it a priority to rescue captured Americans around the world. Well, in the middle of the night, our great American soldiers swept in to a part of Nigeria and rescued an American that had been kidnapped in neighboring Niger. All of those countries around Nigeria, there is a growing insurgency.

One of the alarm bells that were ringing is, yes, we eliminated the caliphate in Iraq and Syria, ISIS is gone, but we have a problem brewing in Western Africa. If you think the Syrian refugee crisis caused a problem in the world and the Syrian civil war, you haven't seen anything yet if Western Africa fails. One of the great challenges of whoever is occupying the Oval Office in subsequent administrations is going to be dealing with this. We're saying this is coming, and now is the time to get ahead of it.

Dr. Dobson: You mentioned Donald Trump. Do you remember he made a speech at the United Nations on this subject? I don't think any president has ever done that, or at least I'm not aware of one.

Johnnie Moore: There's no question that the Trump administration has prioritized religious freedom more than any preceding administration. Donald Trump was the first American president to hold an official event on religious freedom at the United Nations, and that is astonishing. I mean, the first clause of the first sentence of our First Amendment is about religious freedom. No president before him, Republican or Democrat, since the United Nations existed has ever done this. President Trump prioritized religious freedom all across the government so much that he required every single State Department employee to be educated on religious freedom. Hundreds of millions of dollars in American assistance went in to help rebuild the Christian and other Yazidi communities in Iraq and Syria.

The good news about all of that is that when the United States prioritizes an issue around the world, then it incentivizes other people to take similar actions. When you see the peace accord between Israel and the kingdom of Bahrain, the first paragraph of the Abraham Accord includes religious freedom. That Accord, whoever is occupying the Oval Office, will extend for, hopefully, the indefinite future. Their signatures are conditioned upon their promoting religious freedom in their respective Arab countries.

Roger Marsh: This is Roger Marsh. We hate to stop this captivating conversation, but unfortunately, we're out of time for today's broadcast. You've been listening to Dr. Dobson's recent interview with pastor and human rights activist, Johnnie Moore. Be sure to tune in tomorrow here on Family Talk for the conclusion of this conversation. In the meantime, go to our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org to get more plugged in with this subject. On our site, you'll find a link for Johnnie's newest book called the Next Jihad. We also have additional information about his work on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. You'll find all this and more when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

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Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.